ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to Erik A. Jackson, my best friend and husband.

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Social exchange theory has been the theoretical basis for research in a number of areas. However, few studies explicitly examine the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships as conceptualized by Blau's social exchange theory in 1964. Thus, my study reports one of the first empirical assessments of these relationships (i.e., social exchange relationships). Specifically, a longitudinal design was used to examine both antecedents and consequences of social exchange relationships in a sample of employees from a large advertising firm. In doing so, a measure of social exchange relationships was developed. Overall, study results supported the validity of the new measure and the study hypotheses. Significant associations among the nature of employee-employer relationships and employee attitudes and behaviors were found. Specifically, employees who had a social exchange relationship with their organization reported higher levels of affective and normative commitment. Furthermore, these same employees were also rated by their supervisor as performing at higher levels of task

performance, and engaging in more citizenship behaviors and less counterproductive behaviors than employees who reported that they did not have a social exchange relationship with their organization. Results also showed that employees' personality and job stressors in the workplace were significantly associated with social exchange relationships. More specifically, when role stressors (i.e., role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload) and uncertainty were high, employees were less likely to have a social exchange relationship with their organization. In addition, employees who were high on agreeableness and psychological collectivism were more likely to have a social exchange relationship with their employer. Suggestions for future research and implications for managers were discussed.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

For more than half a century, employee-employer relationships have been considered by researchers to be an important aspect of organizational effectiveness (Barnard, 1938; Levinson, 1965; March & Simon, 1958). The main focus of research examining these relationships is the exchange of inducements and contributions among employees and employers. Much of the past research on these relationships has focused specifically on the mechanisms motivating employees' willingness to engage in, continue, or terminate the exchange relationships that they have with their employer.

Recent transitions taking place in today's organizations have resulted in increased attention being placed on employee-employer relationships. For example, external pressures such as changing market demands and competitor innovation are forcing organizations to move away from well-defined hierarchical structures into flatter and more organic structures (Howard, 1995). Unfortunately, these new structures can no longer support traditional career development models, in which employees move up the organizational hierarchy. Rather, workers are now faced with limited promotional opportunities and weak prospects for career advancements in any one organization.

The lack of upward mobility has created a problem with the alignment of employee-employer incentives, as the incentives that encouraged workers to do what is in the best interest of the company have fallen by the wayside. In its place, workers are now faced with having to self-manage their own careers, which often means doing what is in their own best interest rather than the interest of the organization. Furthermore, because

flatter organizational structures have little to offer in terms of promotional opportunities and career advancements, employees have less of an incentive to maintain and develop a lasting relationship with their employer. In fact, it has come to be expected that workers will change jobs, organizations, and even careers with some frequency (Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Murphy & Jackson, 1999). Thus, the emphasis on self-reliance and self-interest may now be fostering employee-employer relationships that are of a transitory and impersonal nature (DeMeuse & Tornow, 1990).

Organizations have also turned to downsizing and rightsizing, in response to competitive demands to increase efficiency and reduce costs. In addition, organizations are relying more heavily on a contingent workforce, and employing fewer permanent employees to combat turbulent market demands (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999; Hulin & Glomb, 1999; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). One consequence of these new organizational trends is unstable employment relationships, as these trends have created a stressful environment in which job loss and layoffs are common (Smithson & Lewis, 2000). Indeed, trends such as these have left workers with a sense of vulnerability, as competence and hard work may not be enough to maintain employment (DeMeuse & Tornow, 1990; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). Thus, the bonds between employees and their employers are weakening, as employees become wary of organizations that engage in such actions.

These workplace trends have combined to make employee-employer relationships an important area of study. Social exchange theory provides one theoretical foundation for differentiating employee-employer relationships, based on the nature of exchanges between an employee and employer. Specifically, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory

categorizes the nature of these relationships as either economic or social. Economic exchange relationships involve specific monetizable exchanges between two parties, over a finite time. Social exchange relationships, on the other hand, involve more open-ended agreements that are socio-emotional in nature between two parties, and agreements that evolve over time, to meet future needs. This conceptualization of employee-employer relationships as either economic or social is particularly important as the nature of employee-employer relationships is transformed from a long-term relationship (based on mutual dependence and trust) to a short-term and detached relationship (driven by self-interest) (Kissler, 1994; Wilhelm, 1994).

To date, few studies have explicitly examined the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships. One main reason for the dearth of research in this area is the lack of a published scale that directly captures how employees define the nature of their relationship with their organization. Thus, the purpose of my study was to examine the nature of employee-employer relationships; and in doing so, to develop a construct-valid measure of these relationships based on the theoretical work of Blau (1964). My study also examined both antecedents and consequences of these relationships, in an attempt to further the management field's understanding of employment relationships.

Next is a general introduction of social exchange theory, an overview of Blau's (1964) version of social exchange theory, and a review of the literature using social exchange theory to examine aspects of employee-employer relationships over the last two decades.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is one theoretical framework that has been used in empirical studies examining exchange relationships within an organizational context. This theory describes how social interactions are driven by the benefits received from exchanges of services. The theoretical unit of analysis is usually the dyad; and the focus of the theory is the pattern of interactions between two parties (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations). In this sense, social exchange theory can be thought of as a theory of interdependence, in which the actions of one party determine the behavior of the other. For the purposes of my study, the dyad of interest was the employee and employer.

Over the years, a number of social exchange theories have been developed. Most of these theories can be found in the disciplines of social psychology (Adams, 1963, 1965; Foa & Foa, 1974, 1980; Homans, 1961, 1974; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959, 1986) and sociology (Blau, 1964). The focus of these theories ranges from exchanges based on economic self-interest to exchanges based on close personal relationships. Given the breadth of these theories, it is not surprising that few generalizations can be applied across all social exchange theories (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001).

Recently, social exchange theory has undergone some criticism. Most of these criticisms stem from the plethora of social exchange theories that exist in various literatures. In fact, social exchange theory has so many variations that the term has been called a misnomer by some researchers (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Cropanzano and colleagues suggest that social exchange theory is better conceptualized as a family of theories with few similarities and much dissimilarity (Cropazano et al., 2001). In any case, it is clear that the term has been compromised, making it difficult for researchers to generalize or draw conclusions about their findings.

Given the above argument, it is imperative that researchers clearly identify the social exchange theory that they are using as a theoretical foundation for their research. It is also important that researchers are careful not to generalize their findings to the broader domain of social exchange theory. My study focused specifically on Blau's version of social exchange theory and hypotheses were derived using this framework.

Blau's social exchange theory. Over the past two decades, Blau's social exchange theory (1964) has received a great deal of attention from organizational researchers. In fact, aspects of this theory have recently been used as the theoretical foundation of research on justice (Cropazano et al., 2001); leadership (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002); perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002); psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995); and organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988; 1990). The focus of much of this research has been to study aspects of the employee-employer relationship and to delineate the motivational mechanisms behind employees' attitudes and behavior.

Taking a sociological perspective, Blau's (1964) theory focuses on the emergent properties that develop through social interactions or exchanges. Specifically, Blau (1964) proposes that the basic premise underlying an exchange involves a person providing a service to another, obligating the other to return the service when the occasion arises. A failure to return a service received in an exchange suggests that the recipient is ungrateful, and thus should not to be trusted to reciprocate in future exchanges. Recurrent mutual exchanges, however, generate trust; which over time develops into a social bond between the parties. This bond, in contrast to rewards from

the exchange, becomes the driving mechanism for future exchanges. That is, once a bond is formed between the parties, the specific services and rewards exchanged are no longer seen at face-value but are valued for the symbols they represent (i.e., trust, support, commitment).

Norm of reciprocity. At this point, it is important to draw a distinction between Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity and Blau's theoretical arguments. Similar to other social exchange theories, Blau's theory suggests that self-interest may be one (although not the only) motivating factor behind social interactions or exchanges. Specifically, he suggests that parties to an exchange engage in voluntary actions or services because of the returns they are expected to receive and typically do receive from others (Blau, 1964, p. 91). In other words, the returns received from an exchange serves as inducements that reinforce both parties to engage in future exchanges. To the extent that the parties value the services of each other, they will continue to reciprocate for payments received, to continue receiving future payments.

In contrast to Blau's (1964) argument, Gouldner (1960) suggests that the norm of reciprocity is the starting mechanism of all exchanges. The norm of reciprocity suggests that people reciprocate benefits received because they "should repay" people who have helped them, and because it is the right and proper thing to do (Gouldner, 1960). Blau agrees with Gouldner that the norm of reciprocity does indeed play a role in social interactions; however, he does not consider it to be the starting mechanism for social exchanges. Rather, Blau states that "the norm of reciprocity merely reinforces and stabilizes tendencies inherent in the character of social exchange itself and that the fundamental starting mechanism of patterned social interactions is found in the existential

conditions of exchange, not in the norm of reciprocity. It is a necessary condition of exchange that individuals, in the interest of continuing to receive needed services, discharge their obligations for having received them in the past (p. 92)." This statement suggests that Blau is placing an overemphasis on self-interest and on the benefits received from an exchange. In fact, this is not the case; rather Blau is merely proposing that self-interest initiates exchanges. Once an exchange relationship has been established, parties may engage in an exchange, not because of self-interest, but rather because of the value the parties place on their relationship, as a result of successful exchanges in the past.

Social versus economic exchanges. Perhaps Blau's (1964) most influential addition to the social exchange theory literature is his distinction between economic and social exchanges. Economic exchanges tend to be of a quid-pro-quo nature. These types of exchanges are similar to formal contracts in that they involve the exchange of services that can be quantified and stipulated ahead of time. Because of the contractual nature of economic exchanges, a party that has failed to reciprocate benefits can be held responsible for its actions or lack thereof. In general, parties that engage in purely economic exchanges tend to have relationships that are driven by the self-interests of the parties.

Social exchange, on the other hand, entails unspecified and diffused obligations. That is, although there is a general expectation that obligations will be fulfilled sometime in the future, the exact nature of these obligations cannot be predetermined. Rather how and when obligations are fulfilled is up to the discretion of the obligated party. Given that obligations cannot be enforced (as they can in a binding contract), social exchanges

require trusting others to discharge their obligations. Trust is fostered to the extent that obligations are appropriately fulfilled by each of the parties involved in the exchange. In these types of exchanges, the parties are less concerned with keeping track of each others' inducements and contributions; and are more concerned with the symbolic nature of the benefits received from the exchange relationship. That is, the specific benefits received in an exchange are valued for the support and trust that they represent, rather than for the extrinsic value of the benefits.

Blau (1964) points out that whether parties engage in social exchanges depends partly on the character of the relationship between the exchange partners. In social exchanges, parties to an exchange have a personal relationship in which the parties are more concerned with each other's interests than their own (which is characteristic of a social exchange relationship). In stark contrast, economic exchanges are more impersonal and detached from the source that supplies the services exchanged. Over time, however, economic exchanges (which initially required very little trust on the part of exchange parties) may evolve into a social exchange relationship. In this instance, the exchange relationship is driven more by the psychological bond between the parties and less by the self-interests of the parties.

Constructs Derived from Social Exchange Theory

Over the years, researchers have used social exchange theory to examine various aspects of employee-employer relationships and their effects on organizationally-relevant outcomes. Social exchange theory constructs that have been examined in the past include an employee's global beliefs concerning an organization's support and commitment to them (Eisenberger, et al., 1986); the quality of the exchange relationship between employees and their leaders or supervisors (Graen & Scandura, 1987); and an employee's

perception of reciprocal obligations that compose employee-employer relationships, respectively (Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau, 1990; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Each of these constructs represents different aspects of employee-employer relationships, and together provides a more comprehensive analysis of such relationships. Next is an overview of each of these constructs. Included in this overview is a review of literature on these constructs, and a theoretical comparison of these constructs to Blau's (1964) social exchange relationships.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) has been used to study aspects of the employee-employer relationship. POS is defined as employees' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). The POS literature uses a social-exchange-theory interpretation of organizational commitment to explain how an employee's commitment to an organization is influenced by the organization's commitment to the employee.

POS theory proposes that employees form global beliefs about an organization's commitment to them, to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased work effort, and to meet socio-emotional needs such as praise and approval (Eisenberger et al., 1986). That is, the higher the level of employees' POS, the higher their expectations that the organization will reward greater effort toward fulfilling organizational goals (effort-outcome expectancy), and the more likely employees are to perceive that the organization will meet their socio-emotional needs. Under these conditions, employees are more likely to form an affective attachment to the organization, and thus incorporate their membership with the organization into their self-identity.

Underlying POS theory is the assumption that employees tend to view actions by agents of the organization as actions of the organization itself (Levinson, 1965). According to Levinson (1965), this personification of the organization is based on the following premises: (a) the organization has a legal, moral, and financial responsibility for the actions of its agents; (b) organizational precedents, traditions, policies, and norms provide continuity, and prescribe role behaviors; and (c) the organization, through its use of agents, exerts power over individual employees. Based on these premises, the POS literature argues that employees will more likely perceive the actions of an organization as indications of the organization's support if employees view the agent's actions as discretionary and representative of the organization's actions.

Empirical support for this argument is provided by two recent studies that examined how perceived supervisor status in an organization, and the discretionary nature of job conditions, were associated with employees' levels of POS (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). These studies found that the relationship between perceived supervisor support and POS was greater for employees who perceived that their supervisors had high informal status in the organization. They also found that the relationship between the favorableness of job conditions and POS was greater for employees who had high-discretionary job conditions.

The initial purpose of the POS literature was to delineate the processes through which employees develop commitment to their organization. The norm of reciprocity has been proposed as one potential motivational basis for employees' commitment to their organization (Gouldner, 1960). The POS literature suggests that the norm of reciprocity

acts as a mechanism through which employees seek to reciprocate to their organization for the support and commitment the organization has provided them. Employees attempt to repay the organization by engaging in behaviors that are directed toward obtaining the organization's goals. This argument is consistent with a recent study of postal employees, which found that felt obligation mediated the associations of POS with affective commitment, organizational spontaneity, and in-role performance (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001).

To date, Eisenberger and colleagues' (1986) Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) is the only measure of POS that exists in the literature. This measure consists of 36 statements representing evaluative judgments of the employee by the organization and discretionary actions the organization might take in diverse situations to benefit or harm the employee. Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that by examining employees' responses to these statements, it can be determined whether employees form global beliefs concerning an organization's commitment to them. Specifically, they suggested that evidence for POS would be provided if employees perceived an organization's evaluations of them as consistently favorable or unfavorable to a high or low degree, and if employees expected that the organization's treatment of them would be consistently beneficially or harmful across various situations. Results of exploratory factor analyses of the 36 statements indicated a one-factor solution, providing some evidence that employees do develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Since the development of Eisenberger and colleagues's (1986) scale, a number of studies have been conducted to further examine the dimensionality and reliability of SPOS, and to provide evidence for the validity of POS as a new construct (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993). These studies have consistently found that SPOS is a valid measure of POS in terms of unidimensionality and high reliability. These and other studies also found evidence that POS is related, but distinct from affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Settoon, et al., 1996; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993); continuance commitment (Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993); perceived supervisor support (Eisenberger, et al., 2002; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Malatesta, 1995; Shore & Tetrick, 1991); perceived organizational politics (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999); leader-member exchange (Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999; Masterson, Lewis, Golman, & Taylor, 2000; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002; Wayne, et al., 1997); procedural justice (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Rhoades, et al., 2001); and job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Taken together, these studies provide evidence for the discriminant and convergent validity of the POS construct. Further evidence for the validity of the POS construct is provided by numerous studies in the POS literature that have examined antecedents and outcomes of the construct.

Initially the POS literature was concerned with organizational commitment as an outcome variable. However, a number of other consequences of POS have also been

examined. In fact, meta-analytic findings have linked POS to organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, in-role/task performance, and withdrawal behavior (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The underlying mechanisms for these connections are similar to those discussed for the link between POS and organizational commitment (including the reciprocity norm, effort-outcome expectancies, and the fulfillment of socio-emotional needs). Researchers argue that these mechanisms provide the motivational basis behind employees' desire to reciprocate an organization for its support. In each of these cases, employees look for ways to repay the organization for its support by engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization (and that are directed at obtaining organizational goals).

Recent meta-analytic results also show four general categories of antecedents that fall under these conditions and that are considered forms of perceived favorable treatment employees receive from their organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These categories include fairness, supervisor support, organizational rewards, and favorable job conditions. Research examining these antecedents argues that instances of perceived favorable treatment are viewed by employees as discretionary actions on the part of the organization. These actions, because of their discretionary nature, are considered indications that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In a similar manner, employees perceive organizational rewards and favorable job conditions as indications that the organization values their contributions, and is willing to reward them for their actions (Eisenberger, et al., 1997; Eisenberger, et al., 2002; Fasolo, 1995; Rhoades, et al., 2001).

Although much of the POS literature uses social exchange theory to explain the relationships above, an important distinction between POS and Blau's social exchange relationships needs to be addressed. Specifically, unlike Blau's social exchange relationships, POS's focus is not the relationship between an employee and employer per se; but rather on the employees' evaluation of an organization's contributions to the relationship. In this sense, employees use POS as an indication that they can trust an organization to fulfill its obligations to them, and also to care about their well-being. According to social exchange theory, this ability to trust an exchange partner is a prerequisite to the development of a social exchange relationship. Thus, it stands to reason that POS can be viewed as an antecedent to the nature of the exchange relationship that develops between an employee and an employer.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange (LMX) has also been used to examine relationships in the workplace. Theoretical and empirical research regarding LMX resides primarily in the leadership literature. Although LMX is considered to be a leadership theory, it differs from traditional leadership theories that focus on the characteristics of the leader, aspects of the situation, or an interaction between the two. In particular, LMX theory takes a relationship approach to leadership, by focusing specifically on the relationship between a leader and a follower. In the context of a working environment, LMX is defined as the quality of the dyadic relationship between an employee and immediate supervisor (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

LMX is a fairly new construct in the leadership literature. The origins of LMX, however, can be found in the Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) research (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975). The VDL model challenges traditional

leadership theories' assumption that leaders exhibit an average leadership style across all subordinates. Specifically, empirical findings from the VDL research demonstrated that leaders develop differential relationships with their followers (Dansereau, et al., 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980). These findings have opened the door for a new stream of research that has shifted the center of attention away from examining average leadership styles and toward examining individual dyadic relationships between a leader and a follower (e.g., supervisor-subordinate).

Underlying the VDL model is the premise that leaders purposefully choose certain subordinates to develop differential relationships because of the potential benefits they expect to receive from doing so (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Their model argues that at the start of the leader-follower relationship, the leader seeks out individuals who are capable of taking on extra work and responsibility. The motivation behind this selection process is the leader's need to maintain an acceptable level of unit productivity. Specifically, leaders are responsible for the unit's output, and cannot by themselves maintain the level of output required by the organization. Thus, they must delegate some of their tasks to subordinates they feel are capable of performing the tasks well.

Because of the direct connection between unit performance and the organization's perception of leader's performance, a leader will not delegate extra tasks to those individuals he or she does not trust. Accordingly, leaders are very selective about which subordinates will be given the chance to take on additional work responsibilities. The VDL model suggests that the factors that leaders take into account when selecting these subordinates include the competence and skill level of the subordinates, the extent to

which leaders feel they can trust the subordinates, and the subordinates' motivation to assume greater responsibility.

Subordinates, who are chosen and then accept an offer by the leader to extend their work requirements, have been referred to in the literature as in-group members (Dansereau, et al., 1975). These individuals are expected to put forth extra effort and accept greater work responsibilities than they otherwise would be required to do formally. In exchange for their extra effort, chosen subordinates receive preferential treatment in the form of greater attention, support, and sensitivity from the supervisor (Liden & Graen, 1980). These forms of preferential treatment are the supervisor's way of rewarding subordinates for their extra effort. VDL theory suggests that the relationship the supervisor has with these subordinates should evolve beyond the formal supervisor-subordinate relationship, to more of a partnership based on respect, trust, and mutual obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

These high-quality LMX relationships are in many ways similar to the social exchange relationships discussed by Blau (1964). First, the relationship between a supervisor and subordinate can be viewed as a series of exchanges of material and nonmaterial goods and services between two parties. Second, these exchanges involve unspecified obligations that are not captured in a formal contract, but based on an informal agreement between two parties. Third, because of the trust involved, these relationships tend to evolve into a psychological relationship or partnership, through the fulfillment of mutual obligations. These similarities between the two types of relationships suggest that high-quality LMX could be thought of as a type of social exchange relationship.

Although the similarities between LMX relationships and Blau's (1964) social exchange relationships are hard to miss, the underlying theoretical arguments regarding how LMX relationships are developed diverge a bit from social exchange theory. In fact, the main thrust of LMX theory draws heavily from role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). Specifically, Graen (1976) argues that the development of differential LMX relationships is a product of a role-making process, in which subordinates develop their roles through an informal process of social interactions or exchanges. According to role theory, these interactions tend to be governed by an authority figure (such as an immediate supervisor), who has a vested interest in the subordinate, and has the authority to negotiate roles with formal sanctions. Specifically, the authority figure and subordinate enter into a negotiating process in which the authority figure seeks to shape the subordinate's behavior (and subsequently his or her roles). Through this negotiating process, the authority figure creates differential relationships with the subordinates. In general, past studies examining the development of LMX relationships have supported this role-making process (Graen, Orris, & Johnson, 1973; Graen, 1976; Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Graen, & Scandura, 1987; Seers & Graen, 1984; Snyder & Bruning, 1985).

Most of the empirical work on LMX has focused on identifying outcomes of high quality exchange relationships. LMX has been found to be meta-analytically linked to organization-relevant subordinate attitudes and performance-related behaviors including satisfaction with supervisor, overall satisfaction, organizational commitment, role perceptions, job performance, and turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997). More recently, LMX has also been found to be associated with organizational citizenship

behaviors, in-role performance, and withdrawal behaviors (Deluga, 1998; Dunegan, Uhl-bien, & Duchon, 2002; Hui, Law, & Chen, 1999; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrow, 2000; Settoon, et al., 1996; Wayne, et al., 2002).

Less research, however, has focused on the antecedents of LMX relationships. In fact, much of the empirical research examining antecedents did not take place until the 1990s. The research that has been conducted suggests that possible determinants of high-quality LMX relationships include member competence (Gerstner & Day, 1997, Snyder & Bruning, 1985); member performance (Bauer & Green, 1996, Deluga, 1998); perceived similarity and liking (Dose, 1999; Engle & Lord, 1997; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993; Phillips & Bedeian, 1994; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne, et al., 1997); value congruence (Ashkanasy & O'Connor, 1997); demographic and personality similarity (Bauer & Green, 1996; Green, Anderson, & Shivers, 1996; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993); influence tactics (Deluga & Perry, 1991; Dockery & Steiner, 1990, Wayne & Ferris, 1990); employee personality (Hui, Law, & Chen, 1999; Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994; Phillips & Bedeian, 1993); and organizational characteristics (Green, et al., 1996). Given the infancy of this research, there is plenty of room for further examination of the determinants of LMX relationships.

As suggested by the research above, LMX theory has come a long way since the inception of the VDL model. Despite these advancements, many questions remain regarding the nature of the LMX construct and its measurements (Gerstner & Day, 1997). These questions originate from the ambiguity about the dimensionality of the LMX construct. In fact, a substantial amount of research has been devoted to examining whether LMX is more appropriately conceptualized as a unidimensional construct that

taps the overall evaluation of the quality of exchanges between a leader and a follower; or as a multidimensional construct (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Maslyn & Uhl-bien, 2001; Schriescheim, Neider, Scandura, & Tepper, 1992). These studies, however, found inconsistent results for the multidimensionality of the LMX construct. Based on the results of these studies, Graen & Uhl-bien (1995) concluded that although LMX may be composed of several dimensions, they are all highly related and thus can be adequately measured with a one-dimensional measure of LMX. This issue, unfortunately, is far from over, as researchers are continuing to examine the dimensionality of the LMX construct (Maslyn & Uhl-bien, 2001).

A number of LMX scales have been developed to attempt to capture the LMX construct. However, the LMX7 unidimensional measure has been found to be the most reliable and construct-valid scale (Grean and Uhl-bien, 1995). This scale has been interpreted as a general measure of the quality of the relationship between a subordinate and a leader. However, a closer inspection of the items in the LMX7 scale below reveals a different interpretation. Specifically, with the exception of the last item, this scale appears to be a measure of the quality of a specific leader rather than representative of the relationship between a leader and follower. As such, it varies from Blau's (1964) social exchange relationships, which are focused more specifically on the nature of the exchange relationship (economic versus social) between an employee and employer. That is, although theoretically there are many similarities between LMX and the social exchange relationships proposed by Blau (1964), operationally the LMX scales are tapping a different construct. Indeed, as suggested by VDL theory, subordinates who have a high quality LMX with their leader receive preferential treatment. From a social

exchange theory perspective, this preferential treatment is interpreted as a symbol of a leader's supportiveness and commitment to the subordinate, and thus provides the basis for the development of a social exchange relationship between a subordinate and leader. This suggests that LMX may be conceptualized as an antecedent to the nature of the exchange relationship that develops between a subordinate and a leader rather than a measure of the relationship itself.

Psychological Contracts

Psychological contracts represent yet another construct that has been used to examine work relationships. Similar to social exchanges, psychological contracts involve an individual's belief regarding the exchange of reciprocal obligations between two parties. According to the psychological contract literature, these obligations become contractual when the individual believes that promises have been made between the two parties to provide certain contributions (e.g., hard work, loyalty) in exchange for certain inducements (e.g., high pay, job security) (Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau, 1990). This emphasis on obligations and reciprocity is the defining characteristic of psychological contracts. It is this characteristic that makes the psychological contract distinct from general expectations, but representative of social exchange relationships.

Underlying much of the psychological contract literature is the assumption that psychological contracts are in the eye of the beholder. In fact, most of the psychological contract literature has been based on Rousseau's (1989) recommendations concerning the conceptualization of the psychological contract. Specifically, Rousseau argues that the psychological contract is a very subjective and idiosyncratic construct, which is dependent on an individual's interpretation of the contract's terms. Given this idiosyncrasy, it is unlikely that both parties involved in the psychological contract share

the same perceptions regarding the terms of the psychological contract. These differences in perception evolve from a number of factors including overt promises, past interactions among parties, and vicarious learning.

Most of the psychological contract research to date, has taken a narrow approach to psychological contract by focusing solely on the employee's viewpoint of the psychological contract between an employee and employer. This focus is consistent with Rousseau's (1989) contention that psychological contracts should be understood from the employee's perspective rather than the organization's viewpoint. In fact, until recently, psychological contract research typically entailed asking employees both their perceptions of their own obligations toward their employer, and their perceptions of their employer's obligations toward them.

This narrower emphasis on the employee's perception rather than the perceptions of both parties has recently undergone some criticism for its inability to detect and examine discrepancies that may exist between the two parties' perceptions of the psychological contract (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Preliminary evidence for the importance of taking both parties perceptions into account was provided by a recent study that examined the discrepancy in supervisor and subordinate perceptions of (and attributions for) psychological contract breach. Specifically, this study found that supervisors and subordinates differed on their perceptions of the extent to which the organization violated its obligations of the psychological contract (Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002). Results also suggested that employees and employers differed in the attributions they made about the cause of the violation. It could be argued that the discrepancies between the employees and employer's perceptions of the content

of the psychological contract may be one reason for organizations' violations of the psychological contract.

A recent study examining the occurrence and impact of psychological contract violations found that approximately 55 percent of new recruits reported that their psychological contract with their employer had been violated (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Violations of the psychological contract are said to occur when one of the parties to an exchange fails to fulfill their obligations. Because obligations are based upon beliefs in a promise, failure of one party to comply with its obligations to another can be expected to produce strong emotional and behavioral responses (Rousseau, 1989; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Schein, 1980). Psychological contract violations are viewed as a sign of deception, betrayal, and lack of respect for the relationship on which the psychological contract was founded (Rousseau, 1989; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Thus, a party's perception that a violation has occurred will likely trigger a range of negative responses including distrust, dissatisfaction, and the weakening or dissolution of the employee-employer relationship (Rousseau, 1989; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Schein, 1980).

Given the frequency with which psychological contract violations occur, and the intensity of responses they evoke, it is no wonder that the majority of empirical studies on psychological contract have focused on psychological contract violations. The main emphasis of these studies has been to examine employee's perceptions of and reactions to employer's violations of their psychological contract with their employees. Empirically, unfulfilled obligations on the part of the organization have been found to be related to trust, loyalty, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, in-role performance,

organizational citizenship behaviors, voice, counter-productive behaviors, intentions to turnover, and actual turnover (Conway & Briner, 2002; Flood, Turner, Ramamoorthy, & Pearson, 2001; Kickul & Lester, 2001; Kickul, Neuman, Parker, & Finkl, 2002; Porter, Pearce, Tripoli, & Lewis, 1998; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Shore & Barksdale, 1998; Turnley & Fieldman, 1999; 2000).

Recently, Robinson, Kraatz, and Rousseau (1994) argued that psychological contract violations may have different effects on different types of employee-employer relationships. Specifically, Robinson and colleagues contend that the nature of an employee-employer relationship will be a determining factor of the consequences that result from psychological contract violations. Specifically, violations of an employee-employer psychological contract that are of a quid-pro-quo nature will result in feelings of inequity. Accordingly, employees will attempt to reinstate a balance in the relationship by increasing perceived entitlements or by decreasing perceived obligations (or both). Violations of psychological contract of a relational and socio-emotional nature will result in an actual shift away from a social relationship based on trust, to an economic relationship characteristic of a formal employment contract.

The differentiation between psychological contracts of an economic versus social nature is a major distinction that has been made in the psychological contract literature (Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). These types of contracts are said to represent opposite ends of a continuum (MacNeil, 1985). At one end of the continuum are transactional contracts, which involve specific monetizable exchanges (e.g., pay for performance) between parties over a specific time. At the other end of the continuum are relational contracts, which involve subjective and open-ended agreements and are

composed of social exchanges (e.g., hard work, loyalty, security), that evolve over time to meet future needs.

Researchers interested in making the distinction between transactional and relational psychological contracts have turned to *content* measures, which focus on identifying the *specific terms* of the psychological contract. Rousseau's (1990) measure is perhaps the most widely used content measure in the psychological contract literature. This measure identifies items that are believed to represent employees' obligations to their organization and the organization's obligations to them. Employee obligations that were identified by Rousseau include overtime, loyalty, extra role behaviors, notice, transfers, no competition, proprietary, and minimum stay. Employer obligations include advancement, high pay, performance-based pay, training, job security, development, and support. Rousseau argued that the *nature* of the psychological contract (relational or transactional) could be inferred by examining the *content* of the psychological contract.

In support of this distinction between transactional and relational contracts, Rousseau (1990) found that distinct types of employment relationships emerge from patterns of employee and employer obligations. Specifically, results of a canonical correlation analysis of employee and employer obligations as perceived by the employee resulted in two functions, which appear to reflect transactional and relational contracts. The first function was composed of a set of employee obligations including employees' perceived obligations to work overtime, to engage in voluntary, extra-role activities, to give notice before quitting, and no obligation of company loyalty. The corresponding set of perceived employer obligations included high pay, performance-based pay, training, and development. Rousseau argued that this set of employee and employer obligations

appear to represent an empirical relationship between hard work on the part of the employee in exchange for high extrinsic returns, which is consistent with a transactional contract. The second function identified was composed of a set of employee obligations including loyalty, willingness to accept transfers, and a willingness to stay a minimum number of years with the company. The employer obligations included advancement, no obligation to train, and job security. Rousseau interpreted this second function as representative of an empirical relationship between loyalty and continued membership in exchange for job security from the employer, which is consistent with a relational contract. Thus, based on Rousseau's interpretations, it appears that distinct types of employment relationships can be identified from patterns of employee and employer obligations.

The identification of two distinct types of contracts suggests that during recruitment, organizations vary on how they portray the nature of the relationships that are fostered in their organization. The perceptions that new employees have of these exchange relationships were found to have differential relationships with organizational-relevant outcomes, such that relational contracts were found to be related to employees expected length of stay at an organization, while transactional contracts were found to be related to an employee's career motive (Rousseau, 1990). The identification of two distinct types of contracts has been supported in subsequent studies (Robinson, 1996; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

The distinction between transactional and relational contracts proposed by Rousseau (1990) is very similar to the distinction Blau (1964) makes between economic and social exchange relationships in the social exchange theory literature. For example,

similar to transactional contracts, economic exchange relationships involve the exchange of terms that have a purely extrinsic value, such as hard work, in exchange for pay for performance or high pay. Similarly, social exchange relationships tend to share content similar to relational contracts. In particular, both social exchange relationships and relational contracts involve the exchange of terms that have an intrinsic value. Perhaps most characteristic of social exchange relationships and relational contracts is the exchange of loyalty for job security. These are content terms that clearly have a socio-emotional value and tend to strengthen and support the relationship between employees and employers. This overlap in content suggests that transactional and relational contracts can be viewed as a form of social exchange relationships.

Although the results above appear to support the distinction between transactional and relational contracts, there are a number of issues that should be addressed concerning the use of content measures to infer the nature of employee-employer relationships. The first issue deals with the interpretation of the functions based on the loading of the obligations. For example, at least one of the four employee obligations (extra-role behaviors) and one of the employer obligations (development) loaded on the transactional contract function when it could more appropriately be categorized as an obligation typical of a relational contract. Because of the discretionary nature of extra-role behaviors, they are more characteristics of diffuse obligations that cannot be specified in advance and thus more representative of a relational contract. Furthermore, development in general is not considered to be a typical obligation that an employer is required to provide employees. Therefore, it could be representative of a relational contract rather than a transactional contract. Another issue that should be addressed is the difficulty in

interpreting the results of the canonical correlations. Specifically, it is not always clear which function the obligations are loading on, because in some instances obligations load roughly equally on both functions and other times obligations do not load highly on either function. Thus, although the nature of the content allows one to infer the nature of the exchange relationship, this is often a fairly abstract process that tends to yield inconsistent results.

Recently, content measures such as Rousseau's (1990) scale have undergone some other criticisms. One of the criticisms of these types of measures is that the content of the psychological contract is just too broad (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Guest, 1998). For example, Anderson and Schalk (1998) state "Because the psychological contract may contain thousands of items, making a list is virtually impossible" (p. 641). Another criticism of content measures is that the content of the psychological contract is not stable over time or across working populations (McLean Parks, Kidder, and Gallagher, 1998; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). In fact, just recently the content of the psychological contract has changed in response to changes in employment relationships (Rousseau, 1995). Taken together, these criticisms question not only the generalizability of content measures but the difficulty in adequately capturing the nature of the employee-employer relationship via the specific obligations that are believed to compose it.

Present Study

As demonstrated above, social exchange theory has been the theoretical basis in many areas of management research. In particular, literature in the areas of POS, LMX, and psychological contracts has used social exchange theory to examine various aspects of employee-employer relationships. While these constructs possess both strengths and weaknesses, they are all deficient in the sense that they do not directly capture the nature

of the exchange relationship between two parties as conceptualized by Blau (1964). That is, each of these research areas uses different constructs to assess components of social exchange theory; however, none of these constructs adequately captures the nature of the exchange relationship. This is unfortunate, in that, a key aspect of social exchange theory is the distinction that is made between social exchange relationships, which are based on trust, and economic exchange relationships, which are driven strictly by extrinsic benefits. Social exchange theory suggests that this distinction is critical in understanding how exchange relationships such as employee-employer relationships are initiated, developed, and maintained over time (Blau, 1964).

From the discussion above, coupled with the criticism regarding content measures of employee-employer relationships, it is apparent that alternative constructs are needed to adequately measure the nature of employee-employer relationships. More specifically, what is needed is a valid measure that is able to adequately capture the underlying dimensions of social exchange relationships. In doing so, it is important that this new measure addresses some of the weaknesses of past social exchange theory constructs. Specifically, what is needed is a measure that captures the multidimensionality of social exchange relationships, directly references the employee-employer relationship rather than the organization or leader, and generalizes across a broad domain of jobs, organizations, and populations.

To do this, I will draw from a relatively unexplored area of the psychological contract literature to identify dimensions that echo Blau's (1964) characterization of social exchange relationships. Specifically, McLean Parks et al. (1998) argue that researchers need to begin to focus on the *underlying dimensions* or characteristics of

employee-employer relationships to resolve the generalizability problem associated with psychological contract content measures. In particular, they argue for the use of *feature* measures, which focus on the *properties* of the contracts themselves, to avoid making assumptions about the actual terms of the contracts.

With the exception of an unpublished measure (McLean Parks & Van Dyne, 1995), feature measures do not exist in the literature. There is, however, a general consensus concerning the most important features or dimensions that need to be taken into account when studying employee-employer relationships (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Many of these characteristics appear to echo those characteristics of social exchange relationships as conceptualized by Blau (1964). These dimensions include focus, stability, and time frame. *Focus* is the relative emphasis of the psychological contract on socio-emotional versus economic concerns. *Stability* is the degree to which the relationship is limited in terms of its ability to evolve and change without an implied renegotiation of the terms. *Time frame* is the extent to which the employee perceives the duration of the relationship to be finite (defined) or indefinite (undefined). These definitions are based on McLean Parks, et al. (1998)'s article, which provides a detailed discussion of these dimensions.

Interestingly, many of the features above appear to parallel the underlying dimensions of Blau's (1964) social exchange relationships, though that point has never been made in the literature. With respect to focus, social exchanges emphasis is on more than just economic incentives, rather these types of exchanges involve the fulfillment of more socio-emotional needs. In terms of stability, social exchange relationships involve unspecified and diffused obligations, and as such are relatively flexible, evolving and

changing to meet future demands. Finally, in regards to time frame, social exchange relationships generally are open-ended and employees approach these relationships as a long-term investment.

Given that many of the features identified by Rousseau and McLean Parks (1993) appear to be consistent with Blau's (1964) conceptualization of social exchange relationships, my study will use these dimensions to develop a direct measure of the nature of employee-employer relationships. Specifically, focus, stability, and time frame appear to be appropriate features of social exchange relationships, and thus should be incorporated into the operationalization of these relationships as defined by Blau. The similarities that exist between these features and social exchange relationships are not surprising given that social exchange theory has provided the theoretical framework for much of the psychological contract literature (Anderson & Schalk, 1998), although few researchers make this acknowledgement.

Table 1-4 summarizes the dimensions that will be used to capture the content domain of social exchange relationships.

Table 1-4. Key dimensions of Blau's social exchange relationships

Dimension	Definition
Focus	Focus is on the relative emphasis of the exchange relationship on socio-emotional versus economic concerns.
Stability	Stability is the degree to which the exchange relationship is limited in terms of its ability to evolve and change without an implied renegotiation of the terms.
Time Frame	Time frame is the degree to which the employee perceives the duration of the relationship to be finite (defined) or indefinite (undefined).

Adapted from McLean Parks, Kidder, and Gallagher (1998). Fitting square pegs into round holes: Mapping the domain of contingent work arrangement onto the psychological contract. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19*, 697-730.

CHAPTER 2
HYPOTHESES

Next I will present explicit hypotheses using Blau's social exchange theory as a theoretical framework (Figure 2-1). In doing so, my study will examine linkages among social exchange relationships (as perceived by the employee) and employee attitudes and behaviors. My study will also examine antecedents of these exchange relationships. To date, a scale directly measuring the underlying dimensions of social exchange relationships, as conceptualized by Blau (1964), does not exist in the literature. Therefore, empirical support for the hypotheses was drawn from the literature in which social exchange theory has been used as a theoretical framework.

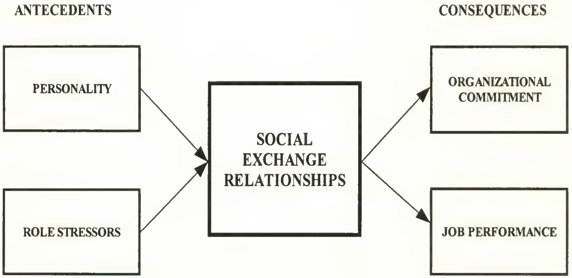

Figure 2-1 Theoretical model.

Consequences of Social Exchange Relationships

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is broadly defined as a psychological state that binds the individual to an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Over the years, a number of conceptualizations have been used to examine organizational commitment's role in organizations. These conceptualizations were integrated by Meyer and Allen's (1991; 1997) three-component model of organizational commitment. This model proposes that an employee's commitment to an organization can be categorized according to the nature of the bond (affective attachment, obligation, and perceived costs) that exists between an employee and employer.

Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997) argued that the components of the three-component model should be viewed as separate and distinguishable aspects of organizational commitment (i.e., affective, normative, and continuance commitment). As such, employees may experience each of these components to varying degrees, and the net sum of these components represents an employee's organizational commitment. This three-component model of organizational commitment has been supported in subsequent studies in which affective, normative, and continuance commitment have been found to have different antecedents and to be related differently to work-relevant behaviors (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Thus, in my study, separate hypotheses were proposed for each of the components.

Affective commitment. Of the three components, affective commitment is perhaps the most widely used measure of organizational commitment. Affective commitment can be defined as an emotional attachment to the organization in which an individual

identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in, the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Conceptually, this form of commitment involves a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

Given the above definition and conceptualization, it is conceivable that the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships may be related to affective commitment. Specifically, social exchange theory argues that through recurrent mutual exchanges the relationship between an employee and employer over time develops into a social or emotional bond. This theory further argues that the stronger this bond is, the more employees value their relationship with their employer. Employees want to maintain this relationship because they have become emotionally attached to their organization. Thus, it can be argued that social exchange relationships will be positively associated with affective commitment.

Normative commitment. Normative commitment, which is the least researched of the three components of organizational commitment, has been conceptualized as a belief about one's responsibility to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In contrast to affective commitment, which is an emotional-based commitment, normative commitment is an obligation-based commitment in which employees are committed to the organization because they ought to be rather than because they want to be. Allen and Meyer (1990) argue that one of the reasons that employees develop this type of commitment is because they have been led to believe that the organization expects them to do so.

Theoretically, there are reasons to expect a relationship between the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships and normative commitment. According to Blau (1964), the basic premise underlying a social exchange involves a person providing a service to another, obligating the other to return the service when the occasion arises. As noted earlier, this obligation to repay services received has been referred to as the norm of reciprocity, which is a universal norm that suggests that individuals should repay people for their services because it is the right and proper thing to do (Gouldner, 1960). Blau (1964) argues that this norm reinforces and stabilizes tendencies inherent in the character of social exchanges. That is, the norm of reciprocity is one underlying mechanism through which employees continue to fulfill their obligations to their organization and thus reinforce the exchange relationship that exists between them. Thus, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their organization will direct their efforts towards "repaying" the employer for their support and commitment not only because they want to, but because they feel obligated to do so. This reasoning suggests that social exchange relationships should be positively associated with normative commitment.

Continuance commitment. Continuance commitment, yet another component of organizational commitment, refers to commitment that is developed as a function of the perceived costs associated with leaving an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Specifically, employees that have a continuance commitment with their organization are committed because of the sunk costs invested in the organization. Thus, these employees are primarily motivated to maintain the relationship with their organization because of the

extrinsic rewards associated with doing so rather than an emotional bond or normative obligation.

Theoretically, there are reasons to suggest that social exchange relationships should be associated with continuance commitment. Specifically, social exchange relationships are characterized by the social and emotional bond that exists between two parties. Employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer are motivated to maintain this relationship because of the rewards associated with doing so. Specifically, through this relationship, the socio-emotional needs of employees are fulfilled in addition to economic incentives. Given the breadth and value that employees place on the socio-emotional rewards associated with this type of relationship, it is unlikely that these employees have a purely economic or continuance commitment to their organization. Rather social exchange relationships involve a commitment that transcends traditional economic relationships. Thus, it stands to reason that social exchange relationships will be negatively associated with continuance commitment.

Indirect empirical support for the links between social exchange relationships and the three components of organizational commitment can be found in a recent meta-analysis of studies examining organizational commitment (Meyer, et al., 2002). Results of this meta-analysis found that all three forms of commitment were related to POS. More specifically, a positive relationship was found between both affective and normative commitment and POS, while a negative relationship was found between continuance commitment and POS. Further support for the proposed relationships can be found in a recent meta-analysis of the POS literature, which also found that POS was positively related to affective commitment, and negatively related to continuance

commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Drawing from the logic applied earlier with respect to POS as a social exchange construct, the theoretical arguments above, and these meta-analytical results, the following was hypothesized:

- **Hypothesis 1a**: Social exchange relationships will be positively related to affective organizational commitment.
- **Hypothesis 1b**: Social exchange relationships will be positively related to normative organizational commitment.
- **Hypothesis 1c**: Social exchange relationships will be negatively related to continuance organizational commitment.

Job Performance

Job Performance components that were examined in this study included task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, counter-productive behaviors, and withdrawal behavior. These outcomes were chosen for a number of reasons. First, there is a general consensus that these are critical outcomes that should be examined and taken into account when measuring job performance (Campbell, 1999; Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993). Second, they represent a more comprehensive representation of job performance than any single indicator (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Finally, these outcomes have been both theoretically and empirically linked to various aspects of employee-employer relationships including perceived organizational support (POS), leader-member exchange (LMX), and violations of psychological contracts.

Task performance. Task performance is defined as the proficiency with which employees perform the activities recognized as part of their job (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). In general, task performance involves behaviors that are both specified and quantifiable and generally can be captured in a written contract. As such, the behaviors that are considered to fall under task performance are required aspects of a job.

It can be argued that task performance may be an appropriate means of reciprocating obligations that are owed to an employer. Specifically, from a social exchange theory perspective, the fulfillment of task requirements may be viewed as a prerequisite for the development of a social exchange relationship between an employee and employer. In particular, social exchange theory argues that an employee's fulfillments of obligations are a sign that the employee values the relationship and can be trusted to fulfill future obligations. Furthermore, because of an employee's desire to maintain this relationship and continue to receive benefits from this relationship, the employee may exert greater efforts towards performing the job. In fact, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their supervisor should tend not only to fulfill their formal role requirements, but to put forth extra effort to perform other activities that extend beyond their formal role requirements.

Meta-analyses conducted in the POS and LMX literature provide indirect support for the association between social exchange relationships and task performance. Specifically, a meta-analysis of the POS literature found a small statistical correlation between POS and in-role performance ($r = .16$), defined as performance of standard job activities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). A meta-analysis of the LMX literature found an overall moderate positive relationship between LMX and objective performance ($r = .32$) (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Based on these findings, and the theoretical arguments above, the following was hypothesized:

- **Hypothesis 2a**: Social exchange relationships will be positively related to task performance.

Organizational citizenship behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) is defined as "individual behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly

recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promote the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). These types of behaviors can benefit coworkers or the organization. OCB that are specifically directed toward benefiting the organization include attending functions that are not required but that help the organizational image, and keeping up with developments in the organization. Examples of OCB that are directed towards benefiting specific individuals and indirectly benefiting the organization include showing genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, and giving up time to help others who have work or nonwork problems (Lee & Allen, 2002; Williams & Anderson, 1991). In general, these types of behaviors have been found to be distinguishable from task performance or in-role behaviors (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

There are theoretical reasons to expect that these OCB should be related to the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships. First, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their organization are constantly finding ways to repay their employer for the rewards received. Because of the discretionary nature of OCB, researchers have argued that these behaviors may be appropriate means through which employees can reciprocate these rewards (Katz, 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1966; Organ, 1988). Second, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their organization value this relationship and therefore engage in behaviors that will help solidify this bond. Given that individuals engage in OCB with the intention of strengthening and maintaining relationships, it is plausible that employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer will chose to engage in OCB for this

purpose (Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995). This reasoning suggests that social exchange relationships should be positively associated with OCB.

Indirect empirical support for the link between social exchange relationships and OCB can be found in recent meta-analyses that have been conducted in the POS and OCB literature. Specifically, Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) found meta-analytic correlations of .20 for POS and OCB. In addition, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach (2000) found a meta-analytic correlation of .31 for POS and Altruism, which is a form of OCB, and a meta-analytic correlation of .36 and .30 for LMX and altruism and overall OCB, respectively. These findings, coupled with the theoretical arguments presented above, suggest that social exchange relationships should be positively associated with OCB. Thus, the following was hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2b: Social exchange relationships will be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB).

Counterproductive behaviors. Counterproductive behaviors can broadly be defined as any voluntary behavior that is directed at harming an organization and its members (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Similar to OCB, these types of behaviors include behaviors that are directed towards the organization (e.g., did something that harmed his/her employer or boss; did work badly, incorrectly, or slowly on purpose), and behaviors that are directed towards a specific individual (e.g., said or did something to purposely hurt someone at work; started an argument with someone at work) (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). In addition, counterproductive behaviors vary in severity from minor (e.g., intentionally working slowly; wasting resources) to very serious (e.g., sabotage, violence) (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

It can be argued that an association between the nature (economic versus social) of employee-employer relationships and counter-productive behaviors is likely to exist. Specifically, social exchange relationships are based on trust. Employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer value the bond that exists between them. Thus, these employees would refrain from behaving in ways that would suggest to their employer that they are not to be trusted. Since counterproductive behaviors may be viewed by employers as acts against them, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer would not intentionally engage in these types of behavior because they would not want to jeopardize hurting the relationship with their employer. Thus, social exchange relationships should be negatively associated to counterproductive behaviors.

Indirect empirical support for the relationship between social exchange relationships and counterproductive behaviors can be provided by a study in which the damaging affects of poor exchange relationships were investigated (Townsend, Phillips, & Elkins, 2000). Specifically, this study examined the effects of low-quality LMX relationships on retaliation behaviors, which are characterized as discretionary behaviors used by employees to reciprocate perceived injustice and mistreatment by an organization and its representatives. The results of this study indicated that employees in low-LMX relationships exhibited more retaliatory behaviors than employees in high-quality LMX relationships. These results suggest that social exchange relationships, which are characteristic of high-quality LMX relationships, should be negatively associated with counterproductive behaviors. Given these findings, and the theoretical arguments presented above, the following was hypothesized:

- **Hypothesis 2c**: Social exchange relationships will be negatively related to counterproductive behaviors.

Withdrawal behaviors. Withdrawal behaviors are defined as the set of behaviors that dissatisfied individuals enact to avoid the work situation, and include behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and voluntary turnover, and less objective forms of behavior such as chatting with co-workers about nonwork topics and spending time daydreaming rather than working (Hulin, 1991). Dissatisfied employees engage in these behaviors in an attempt to distance themselves from the work environment. Because such behaviors interfere with the completion of work activities, they have been argued to directly affect productivity and organizational costs (Lehman & Simpson, 1992).

Theoretically, there are reasons to suggest that social exchange relationships should be related to withdrawal behavior. Specifically, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer value this relationship, and are therefore motivated to maintain it. One way that employees can do this is by appropriately fulfilling his or her obligations to their employer. Indeed, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their organization should exert extra effort toward satisfying the needs of the organization. Since withdrawal behaviors can be construed as a reduction in employees' contributions and directly affects productivity, employees who have a social exchange relationship with their employer should be less likely to engage in these types of behaviors.

Indirect support for an association between social exchange relationships and withdrawal behaviors is provided by a meta-analytic analysis of the POS literature. Specifically, Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) found that POS had a moderately negative relationship with multiple measures of withdrawal behaviors, including turnover,

absenteeism, and tardiness. Based on these findings and the theoretical arguments above, the following was hypothesized:

- **Hypothesis 2d**: Social exchange relationships will be negatively related to withdrawal behaviors.

Antecedents of Social Exchange Relationships

Stressors in the Workplace

Social exchange relationships can be driven by facets of the situation or aspects of the person. One relevant situational variable is job stressors in the workplace. Job stressors create stressful working conditions or job stress, which is defined as a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change (i.e., disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological and/or physical conditions such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Recent studies of stress in the workplace have found that most employees in the workforce are reporting that they are under high levels of stress (NIOSH, 1999). Much of this stress can be attributed to various job stressors (i.e., environmental demands with which individuals feel unable to cope) in the workplace that create stressful demands on the worker (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When these demands exceed a worker's capacity to cope, work attitudes and performance are likely to deteriorate (Erera-Weatherley, 1996).

Stressors in the workplace include, but are not limited to, role conflict that stems from mutual incompatible role requirements, role overload that results from excessive role demands, role ambiguity that exists when the information available is less than is required for adequate performance of a role, and the amount of uncertainty in a work environment (Kahn, et al., 1964). These stressors are argued to be situational constraints or "features of the work environment that act as obstacles to performance by preventing

employees from fully translating their ability and motivation into performance" (Klein & Kim, 1998, p. 88; see also Peters, O'Connor, & Eulberg, 1985). Employees who are required to deal with these constraints become frustrated with their current situation because they are not able to perform well despite their efforts and capabilities.

The frustration that employees feel due to job stressors places strain on employee-employer relationships as tensions run high when demands exceed an employee's capacity to cope (Marshal & Cooper, 1979). My study will examine how job stressors (i.e., role stressors and uncertainty) in an employee's working environment affect the exchange relationship that the employee has with his or her employer. It is during stressful times that a social exchange relationship becomes most important, but there are reasons to suspect that such relationships will be less likely in the presence of job stressors.

Kahn and colleagues' Theory of Role Dynamics (Kahn, et al., 1964) provides one theoretical foundation for the association between job stressors and employee-employer social exchange relationships. The focus of this theory is on role episodes of a focal person who is experiencing stress due to job stressors in the work environment. These episodes entail a recurrent causal sequence in which sent pressures from role senders lead a focal person to experience emotional tension, which then leads the focal person to engage in coping responses, which are perceived and evaluated in relation to expectations held by role senders. The coping responses of the focal person have a direct effect on the relationship between the focal person and his or her role senders such that changes in the focal person's feelings and behavior toward the role senders are likely to change the interpersonal relationship between them.

According to the Theory of Role Dynamics, job stressors that are present in the work environment, such as contradictory role expectations, place extreme pressures on the focal person. These pressures in turn generate a number of emotional responses including intensified internal conflicts, increased tension associated with aspects of the job, reduced satisfaction with the job, and decreased confidence in superiors and in the organization. The strain experienced due to job stressors leads to various coping responses including rejection and/or withdrawal from those role senders that are producing the stress. The end result is a weakening of the interpersonal bonds among the focal person and his or her role senders.

Support for the claim that the presence of job stressors in one's work environment tends to undermine interpersonal affective bonds that one has with his or her work associates can be found in a nationwide survey conducted by Kahn and colleagues (Kahn et al., 1964).The findings of this research suggested that when an employee is experiencing stress due to job stressors, he or she is not only more likely to be dissatisfied with the work situation, but less likely to perceive that the organization is looking out for his or her welfare. Specifically, Kahn and colleagues found that under conditions of high stress (i.e., high levels of role conflict and role ambiguity) employees are less likely to trust, respect, and have an attraction to the role senders who create the stressors, and towards the job and the organization in general. Moreover, employees experiencing stress due to job stressors are more likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors as a means of coping with the stress. These findings coupled with the theoretical framework provided by the Theory of Role Dynamics suggest that stressful work environments serve as a

hindrance or constraint on the development and maintenance of social exchange relationships.

More recent support for the role stressors-social exchange relationship linkage can be found in a meta-analytic review of the POS literature. Specifically, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found a strong meta-analytic correlation between role stressors and POS ($r = -.40$, corrected for attenuation). The assumption behind this relationship is that role stressors should reduce POS to the extent that employees attribute job-related stressors to conditions that are controllable by the organization, as opposed to conditions inherent in the job or resulting from outside pressures on the organization. Based on this assumption, and the theoretical and empirical work presented above, a negative relationship was expected between job stressors in the work environment and employee-employer social exchange relationships.

- **Hypothesis 3**: Job stressors will be negatively related to social exchange relationships such that when role stressors and uncertainty are high, employees will be less likely to have a social exchange relationship with their employer.

Personality

As mentioned above, aspects of a person such as their personality may also be influential in determining how employees view their relationship with their organization. Researchers generally agree that personality can best be captured by a five-factor structure, which breaks personality down into five distinct categories (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990). These categories, which are most commonly referred to as the "Big Five", include: (a) Neuroticism (e.g., tense, insecure, nervous), (b) Extraversion (e.g., sociable, talkative, energetic), (c) Openness to Experience (e.g., imaginative, curious, broad minded), (d) Agreeableness (e.g., trusting, generous, kind), and (e) Conscientiousness (e.g., responsible, persistent, hard working) (Costa & McCrae, 1992;

Goldberg, 1981; 1990). This typology has been found to be very stable and generalizable across different samples, time, raters, and instruments (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1985; 1987; 1990).

To date, very little research on the effects of personality on aspects of the employee-employer relationships has been conducted. One plausible reason for the lack of research in this area may be that it is difficult to examine personality effects using the currently used indicators of employee-employer relationships. For instance, an individual's conscientiousness is unlikely to be linked to POS, which is primarily determined by the actions of the organization itself rather than the actions of the employee. According to the POS literature, employees view the actions of the organization (or agents of the organization) as evidence that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In fact, the antecedents (e.g., fairness, supervisor support, organization rewards and favorable job conditions) that have been identified in the POS literature explicitly focus on the actions of the organization (or agents of the organization) rather than the characteristics of employees.

There are, however, reasons to expect an association between individual differences and social exchange relationships. Specifically, the development of social exchange relationships is directly determined by an individual's actions. For example, social exchange relationships require that an individual first and foremost trusts the organization, and second that the individual can be trusted by the organization to fulfill their responsibilities to the relationship. In the case of the link between conscientiousness and social exchange relationships, conscientious individuals should be more likely to fulfill job requirements, and thus fulfill their obligations to the organization. These

behaviors provide the organization with evidence that the individual can be trusted to engage in future exchanges, thus reinforcing the trust between employees and the organization.

Despite the lack of attention that personality has received, there are reasons to suggest that some of the Big Five factors may be a useful means of predicting differences in the nature of employee-employer relationships. Specifically, it is proposed that an individual's disposition will be associated with the development (or lack thereof) of social exchange relationships. The following section will expand on this proposition in greater detail, providing individual hypotheses for those factors that are predicted to foster social exchange relationships.

Neuroticism. Fearful, angry, anxious, worrisome, and insecure are some of the common traits that are used to describe individuals high on neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Individuals with these traits are very emotional and insecure with their surroundings. In fact, neurotic individuals are prone to have irrational thoughts, and often perceive others as engaging in untrustworthy behavior. Social exchange relationships entail unspecified and diffused obligations, which require exchange partners to trust that the other will discharge obligations appropriately. Given that neurotic individuals tend to be suspicious of others actions, and thus are hesitant to trust others, it is conceivable that these individuals would be less likely to have a social exchange relationship with their employer.

Extroversion. Traits that are typically associated with individuals high on extroversion include active, social, gregarious, assertive, talkative, and optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Individuals high on extroversion are most comfortable in social

situations, and often seek out opportunities to interact with others. Social exchange relationships are characterized by the affective bonds that develop between exchange parties, and are driven by the socio-emotional rewards associated with these relationships (e.g., trust, support, and belonging). Given the affiliative nature of these types of exchanges, coupled with the importance extroverts place on interpersonal relationships, it stands to reason that extroverts would be inclined to have a social exchange relationship with their employer.

Agreeableness. Individuals high on agreeableness are described as being friendly, helpful, trusting, sympathetic, and generous (Costa & McCrae, 1992). As such, these individuals are altruistic in their actions, are always eager to help others, and believe that others will be equally helpful in return. The supportiveness and trust that characterize agreeable individuals are the underlying mechanisms through which social exchange relationships are developed and maintained. That is, these are the exact traits that tend to foster interpersonal bonds among individuals and form the basis of social exchange relationships. Thus, it seems plausible that individuals that are agreeable are more likely to define their relationship with their employer in more socio-emotional terms.

Conscientiousness. Conscientious individuals are generally characterized as being dependable, thorough, self-disciplined, achievement-oriented, and dutiful (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In addition, individuals high on conscientiousness are purposeful in their actions, are driven to fulfill their duties and responsibilities, and expend great effort to do so. The fulfillment of obligations is a requirement for the development of social exchange relationships. That is, adequate fulfillment of obligations is viewed as a sign that an exchange party values the relationship, and can be trusted to engage in future exchanges.

Given that conscientious individuals are dependable and are willing to go the extra mile for others (LePine and Van Dyne, 2001), it is reasonable to expect that conscientious individuals would have a social exchange relationship with their employer.

While the associations between the Big Five and social exchange relationships have yet to be examined, Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmidt (1997) have speculated that an individual's disposition should be associated with the means to which individuals fulfill their obligations to the organization. Specifically, Motowidlo and colleagues argue that certain types of individuals will be predisposed to engage in behaviors that extend beyond normal job requirements and are directed at improving the organizational, social, psychological environment of the workplace. Examples of these types of behaviors include helping and cooperating with others, volunteering to perform non-required activities, and persisting with enthusiasm and effort (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). These particular behaviors contribute to the social and psychological environment of the workplace, and thus fostering a supportive climate. Therefore, Motowidlo and colleagues theoretical framework provides further support for the association between personality and social exchange relationships.

Empirically, cooperative outcomes such as those listed above have been found to be linked to certain types of personality characteristics. Past research has meta-analytically examined the relationships between an individual's level of neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and an individual's tendency to engage in behaviors that are altruistic in nature and supportive of interpersonal interactions and team functioning (Hough, 1992; Mount, Barrick, and Stewart, 1998; Organ & Ryan, 1995). More recently, LePine and Van Dyne (2001) replicated these

findings linking all four personality characteristics to cooperative behaviors in a laboratory setting. These empirical findings, coupled with the theoretical arguments above, provide support for the linkages between personality and social exchange relationships.

- **Hypothesis 4a**: Neuroticism will be negatively related to social exchange relationships.
- **Hypothesis 4b**: Extroversion will be positively related to social exchange relationships.
- **Hypothesis 4c**: Agreeableness will be positively related to social exchange relationships.
- **Hypothesis 4d**: Conscientiousness will be positively related to social exchange relationships.

Collectivism. Collectivism is another individual difference variable that may be useful in explaining the differences in the nature of employee-employer relationships. Collectivism can be defined as an individual's orientation toward a collective such that the interests, goals, and values of a collective govern actions more than one's self-interest (Parsons & Shils, 1951). The appearance of collectivism in the management field can be attributed to Hofstede's (1980) country-level research on work values. In his research, Hofstede identified collectivism as one of four country variables that can be used to explain cultural differences across countries. Since then, a number of researchers have examined the role of collectivism as a cross-cultural variable often using countries as proxies for measures of collectivism, rather than measuring it directly (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Another stream of research has examined collectivism as a within-culture variable. This conceptualization of collectivism as an individual difference variable can be attributed to Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clark (1985), who propose that within a

given culture, individuals will vary in their collectivist orientations. In support of this psychological or individual-level collectivism, Triandis and colleagues found a significant amount of within-country variance, with approximately 60% of individuals in a collectivist culture having a collectivist orientation (Triandis, Carnevale, Gelfand, Robert, Wasti et al., 2001). Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis found a surprising amount of cross-cultural convergence and within-country heterogeneity, suggesting that analysis of collectivism at the individual-level is warranted (Oyserman, et al., 2002).

Past reviews of collectivism have identified a number of dimensions that are considered to be the core of the collectivism construct. These dimensions include a preference to exist within the bounds of an ingroup rather than independently, a belief that one person's responsibility is the responsibility of the entire ingroup, a concern for the wellbeing of an ingroup, an acceptance of ingroup norms, and a prioritization of ingroup goals over individual goals (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Triandis, 1989; 1995; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997; Oyserman, et al., 2002). Based on these facets, it is reasonable to believe that collectivism is another individual difference variable that may be useful in explaining the differences in the nature of employee-employer relationships. Specifically, collectivists are motivated by the bonds they have with others, are self-sacrificing, are comfortable relying on others to do their part, and have a sincere concern for others. These tendencies seem to be precisely those which foster and maintain social exchange relationships. Indeed, social exchange relationships are characterized by trust, selfless initiative, and loyalty. Given this, it seems reasonable to expect that an individual's collectivist orientation will be associated with how an individual defines the nature of his/her relationship with his/her employer.

While the link between collectivism and social exchange relationships has not been empirically examined, Triandis and Bhawuk (1997) have suggested that such an association should exist. Specifically, they propose that individuals with a collectivist orientation would approach exchange relationships differently, such that collectivists would perceive their relationship with their employer as more open-ended, flexible, and altruistic in nature. These are some of the defining characteristics of social exchange relationships as proposed by Blau (1964). As such, the following was hypothesized:

- **Hypothesis 4e**: Collectivism will be positively related to social exchange relationships.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Sample

Participants were recruited from all levels of a large southeastern advertising company from top management to support-staff personnel. All participants were full-time employees. Approximately 54% were female and 88% were white, with an average age of 33, and a mean salary of $55,000. Approximately 3% had a high school degree, 18% had some college, 62% had a bachelor's degree, and 17% had an advanced degree (i.e., masters, Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or other advanced degree). Participants worked in their current position an average of 5 years and worked for the organization an average of 10 years. Sampling from various levels of the organization ensured a wide range of social exchange relationships, job stressors, and personality characteristics, thus providing a more powerful test of the study hypotheses.

Procedure

My study used a longitudinal design with three periods of data collection separated by six week intervals. All data were collected using internet-based surveys.

The owner of the company initiated first contact with all potential participants through a voice mail message containing a request to participate in the study. This voice mail was followed by an email that was sent by the author containing an internet link to access the consent form and questionnaire for time 1. This questionnaire contained measures of personality (i.e., Big Five and collectivism), and constructs derived from social exchange theory (i.e., perceived organizational support, psychological contracts,

and leader-member exchange), which were used to assess the construct validity of the new social exchange relationship measure. This survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. A week later, a reminder email from the author containing another link to the survey was sent to participants. Of the 545 employees who were asked to participate in the study, 359 fully completed the first on-line survey. This resulted in a 66% response rate.

Individuals who provided data at time 1 were contacted again at time 2 to fill out an additional survey. The time 2 survey contained measures of job stressors, social exchange relationships, and employee attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment). At this time, participants were also asked to report the name of their immediate supervisor, and information regarding their gender, race, age, salary, education, tenure in their present position, and tenure in the organization. This survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The sample size for time 2 was 243, with a response rate of 68%. To ensure that the attrition between time 1 and 2 was not systematic, the means of the time 1 scales were compared across the two groups. With the exception of extroversion ($t = 2.64$), there were no significant differences between individuals who only filled out the time 1 survey and individuals who filled out the surveys for time 1 and 2 (average $t = 1.07$). These results suggest that extroverted individuals tended to complete both surveys more so than less extroverted individuals.

Immediate supervisors of participants who completed the time 1 and 2 surveys were requested at time 3 to rate these subordinates on various performance dimensions (i.e., task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, counterproductive behaviors, and withdrawal behaviors). Similar to time 1 and 2, these supervisors received

an email from the author requesting their participation in the study. This email contained individual links for each subordinate they were asked to rate. The links contained a unique identification code that allowed the supervisor ratings to be matched with the participants' responses for time 1 and 2. The supervisor survey took no more than 5 minutes to complete for each subordinate and each supervisor rated no more than 5 subordinates. In addition to the initial request to participate in the study, two reminder emails were sent approximately one and two weeks after the initial email. The response rate for this final data collection stage was 60% ($N = 145$). Once again, to ensure that there were no significant difference between the participants who were rated and those who were not, the mean of time 1 and 2 scales were compared across the two groups. Significant differences were found for demographic variables including age ($t = 3.31$), gender ($t = 4.59$), education ($t = -8.60$), and salary ($t = 4.60$). Significant differences were also found for personality variables including neuroticism ($t = -2.03$) and openness ($t = 3.25$). These comparison of means suggest that supervisors tended to rate subordinates who were older, male, had a lower level of education, and higher salaries. In addition, supervisors tended to rate subordinates who were low on neuroticism and high on openness to experience.

All respondents were guaranteed complete anonymity and no names were associated with responses, rather each participant was assigned a unique identification code to distinguish their responses from others. The identification code was nested within the links contained in the email sent by the author. This anonymity, coupled with the reminder emails and the endorsement of the owner of the company, maximized the response rate. In addition, the longitudinal design and use of multiple sources alleviated

some concerns about the causal assessment of the relationships examined in the study, and issues of same-source bias.

Measures

All measures were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with anchors of 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 representing strongly agree, with the exception of counterproductive behaviors, which were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with anchors of 1 representing very infrequently to 5 representing very frequently.

Social Exchange Relationships

Given that a scale does not exist in the literature to explicitly assess the nature of employee-employer relationships (as perceived by the employee), a scale was developed for the purposes of my study. Study hypotheses will be tested using this new scale. It is important to note that although the referent of the scale items is the employee-employer relationship, the scale is not assessing the dyadic relationship per se (as would be the case if both the employee and employer assessed the relationship), but rather only of the one exchange partner's (i.e., the employee) perception of the nature (economic versus social) of the employee-employer relationship. Focusing specifically on the employee's perception is most appropriate given that my study is interested in how employees' perception of their relationship with their employer influences their attitudes and behaviors, and how this perception is influenced by person and situation factors in the work environment.

The key dimensions identified in Table 1-4 were used to generate items for the new social exchange relationship scale. Initially, six items were generated for each of the three dimensions (Table 3-1). However, to trim the scale down to a more practical length, a confirmatory factor analysis of the scale using maximum likelihood estimation in EQS

(Bentler, 1995), with raw data as input, was conducted on the initial 18 items. A second-order factor structure was examined, with focus, stability, and time frame serving as latent indicators of a higher-order social exchange relationship factor. Items were dropped based on the factor loadings, modification indices, and item skewness and kurtosis. In addition, care was taken to select items that represented both ends of the social exchange relationship continuum within each of the three dimensions. This analysis resulted in a shorter 9-item measure with each dimension represented by three items. A final list of the items chosen and the instruction for the scale can be found in Table 3-2. Of course, as with any scale development process, the changes made to this 9-item scale will need to be cross validated to ensure that the items are not sample specific.

Consequences of Social Exchange Relationships

Organizational commitment. Affective, normative, and continuance commitment were assessed with 6 items each from Meyer and Allen's (1997) scale. Example items for affective commitment include: "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me," "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own," and "I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization (R)." Example items for normative commitment include: "I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer (R)," "This organizational deserves my loyalty," and "I would feel guilty if I left my organization now." Finally, example items for continuance commitment include: "Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire," "I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving the organization," and "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to." The coefficient alphas for affective, normative, and continuance commitment were .85, .82, 74, respectively.

Table 3-1. Initial items of social exchange relationship scale

Initial Measure Items	Dimension
My relationship with my organization is more like a partnership with give and take on both sides.	Focus
My relationship with my organization extends beyond typical employment relationships - we both "give more to get more."	Focus
My relationship with my organization has evolved into something deeper than simple economic exchanges.	Focus
I have a clear understanding with my organization – I work to get paid.	Focus
My relationship with my organization is an economic one – I fulfill my job duties and they pay me.	Focus
My relationship with my organization is based on economic exchanges.	Focus
I am willing to change the terms of my relationship with my organization to suit the situation.	Stability
It is not uncommon for the relationship I have with my organization to change to accommodate the situation.	Stability
I am willing to change the terms of my relationship with my organization if either of our goals and objectives were to change.	Stability
I would not be willing to change the terms of my relationship with my organization without some renegotiation.	Stability
Changing the terms of my relationship with my organization would require some renegotiation.	Stability
Some negotiation would be required to change the terms of my relationship with my organization.	Stability
The contributions that my organization and I make to our relationship tend to equal out in the end.	Time Frame
Over time, my organization and I will repay each other for services provided.	Time Frame
I know that the contributions that my organization and I make to the relationship will eventually balance out.	Time Frame
My relationship with my organization is driven by what we each can get out of the relationship now rather than later.	Time Frame
The relationship that I have with my organization is driven by what we can provide each other in the short-term rather than long-term.	Time Frame
The relationship with my organization is driven by immediate rewards rather than future benefits.	Time Frame

Task performance. Williams and Anderson's (1991) 7-item scale was used to measure task performance. Example items include: "Adequately completes assigned duties," "Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description," and "Meets formal requirements of the job." The coefficient alpha for this measure was .91.

Table 3-2. Final version of social exchange relationship scale

Instructions	
The questions below ask you about the relationship that you have with the organization you currently work for. Please answer each of the following questions, as honestly as possible, using the response scales provided (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).	
Final Items	**Dimension**
My relationship with my organization is more like a partnership with give and take on both sides.	Focus
My relationship with my organization extends beyond typical employment relationships - we both "give more to get more."	Focus
My relationship with my organization is an economic one – I fulfill my job duties and they pay me.	Focus
It is not uncommon for the relationship I have with my organization to change to accommodate the situation.	Stability
I am willing to change the terms of my relationship with my organization if either of our goals and objectives were to change.	Stability
I would not be willing to change the terms of my relationship with my organization without some renegotiation.	Stability
Over time, my organization and I will repay each other for services provided.	Time Frame
I know that the contributions that my organization and I make to the relationship will eventually balance out.	Time Frame
My relationship with my organization is driven by what we each can get out of the relationship now rather than later.	Time Frame

Organizational citizenship behaviors. OCB were assessed using Lee and Allen's (2002) 16-item measure. While the practice is to measure OCB at the facet level, recent meta-analytic findings suggest that OCB is most appropriately assessed at the aggregate level (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Analyses of my study hypotheses indicated that no significant differences were found when using the facet level (individual and organization) or aggregate measure of OCB. Thus, based on these results and keeping with the meta-analytic findings of LePine and colleagues, an overall measure of OCB was used to test the study hypotheses. Example items include: "Assist others with their duties," "Willingly give his/her time to help others who have work-related problems," "Help others who have been absent," "Offer ideas to improve the functioning of the

organization," "Express loyalty to the organization," and "Demonstrate concern about the image of the organization." This measure's coefficient alpha was .91.

Counterproductive behaviors. Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly's (1998) 9-item scale was used to assess counterproductive behaviors. Participant's supervisors were asked to indicate how frequently within the last year a particular participant engaged in the behaviors indicated by each item. Example items include: "Damaged property belonging to employer," "Said or did something to purposely hurt someone at work," and "Deliberately bent or broke a rule(s)." The coefficient alpha for this measure was .74.

Withdrawal behaviors. Withdrawal behaviors were measured with items taken from Lehman & Simpson (1992). Items that compose this scale included: "Has been absent from work," "Chatted with co-workers about nonwork topics," "Seemed to be daydreaming rather than working," "Spent work time on personal matters," "Talked about leaving current job or work group," "Left work early without permission," and "Taken longer lunch or rest breaks than allowed." This measure's coefficient alpha was .78.

Antecedents of Social Exchange Relationships

Role stressors. Role stressors were assessed with Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh's (1983) 8-item measure. Example items include: "On my job, I can't satisfy everybody at the same time," "On my job, I know exactly what is expected of me," and "I never seem to have enough time to get everything done." The coefficient alpha for this measure was .74.

Uncertainty in the workplace. Uncertainty was measured with a 6-item ad-hoc scale. The items for this scale included: "There is a lot of uncertainty at work right now," "Many things seem unsettled at work currently," "If I think about work, I feel a lot of

uncertainty," "I cannot predict how things will go at work," "There have been a lot of changes at work lately." This measure's coefficient alpha was .89.

Big Five. Participants' personality was assessed with Goldberg's 1990 scale. This measure assesses five general categories of personality including neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Individual hypotheses were indicated for each of the personality factors with the exception of openness to experience, which was included for the sake of completeness. The coefficient alphas for neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were .87, .73, .88, .86, and .87, respectively.

Collectivism. An individual's collectivist orientation was measured using a 15-item scale developed by Jackson, Colquitt, and Wesson (2004). Participants were asked to think about the co-workers who they work closely with in the workplace, and who they frequently interact with as part of their work group, and to answer each of the items with these individuals in mind. Example items include: "I preferred to work with those groups rather than working alone," "I felt comfortable counting on those individuals to do their part," "I cared about the well-being of those individuals," "I followed the norms of those groups," and "I cared more about the goals of those individuals than my own goals." This measure had a coefficient alpha of .87.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Validation of Social Exchange Relationships Measure

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Prior to testing the study hypotheses, the construct validity of the new 9-item social exchange scale needed to be evaluated. This was accomplished by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis of the scale using maximum likelihood estimation in EQS (Bentler, 1995), with raw data as input. Specifically, a second-order factor structure was examined, with focus, stability, and time frame serving as latent indicators of a higher-order social exchange relationship factor.

A number of fit indices were used to assess the fit of the measurement model. The first of these indices was χ^2, which assesses the extent to which observed covariances match the covariances implied by a model's structure. This is a "badness of fit" index in that the greater the departure from zero, the worse the model fit. However, because χ^2 is sensitive to sample size and is almost always significant, the ratio of χ^2 to degrees of freedom was also used to assess the fit of the model. A ratio of 2 or below is typically used as an arbitrary indicator of good model fit (Arbuckle, 1997).

Other fit indices used to assess the model fit included the incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and Browne & Cudeck's (1993) root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) estimate and 90% confidence interval. The IFI and CFI compare the fit of a given model to a null model in which variables are assumed to be uncorrelated (Bentler, 1990), and range in values from 0 to 1, with .90 typically used as

an arbitrary indicator of good fit. In terms of RMSEA, a value of 0 indicates a perfect model fit, while values greater than .10 indicate poor fit, values between .08 and .10 indicate mediocre fit, values between .05 and .08 indicate reasonable fit, and values less than .05 indicate good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Finally, the 90% confidence interval of the RMSEA represents the precision of the estimate.

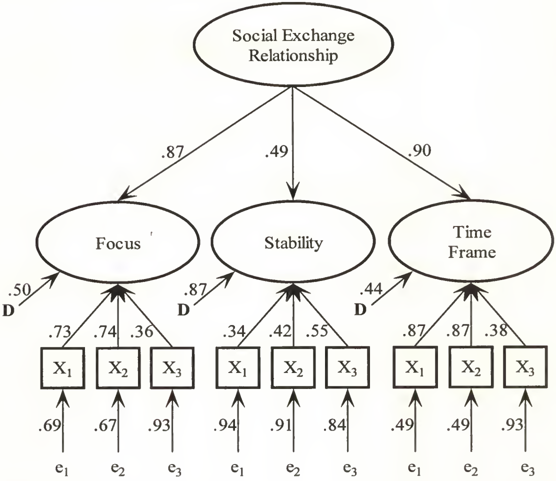

Figure 3-1 Confirmatory factor analysis results of the social exchange relationship scale

The results of the CFA indicated that the model fit the data reasonable well ($\chi 2$ (24, N = 247) = 67.49, p < .001; $\chi 2$/df = 2.81; IFI = .92; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .09 (.06, .11)). As shown in Figure 3-1, all nine items loaded on their intended factor, with loadings ranging from .34 to .87, with an average of .58. In addition, the three facets loaded

adequately on the higher-order social exchange relationship construct: .87 for focus, .49 for stability, and .90 for time frame.

However, to determine the appropriateness of the second-order factor structure, alternative models were assessed. Specifically, the second-order factor structure was compared to a one factor structure with each of the nine items loading on a general social exchange relationship construct, and a three-factor model with each of the dimensions representing independent factors. The one-factor model fit the data quite poorly (i.e., IFI and CFI < .90; RMSEA > .10). Furthermore, chi-square differences indicated that the second-order factor structure offered a significant improvement in fit over this model. In contrast, the fit of the three-factor model was equivalent to the fit of the second-order factor structure, suggesting that a three-factor structure is a plausible alternative model. However, the adequate factor loadings of the three facets on the higher-order social exchange relationships construct suggest that despite the equivalent fit of the two models, social exchange relationships are most appropriately captured by a second-order factor structure.

Further Validation

Although strict convergent validity for the new social exchange scale cannot be assessed due to the lack of an existing measure, the nomological network of the scale can be evaluated by comparing the magnitude of the correlations between social exchange relationships and other constructs representing aspects of the employee-employer relationship (i.e., POS, LMX, psychological contracts). As indicated in Table 4 -1, the correlations between social exchange relationships and POS, LMX, and psychological contracts were moderate in magnitude, providing some support for the validity of the new scale. Moreover, the magnitudes of the correlations were not high enough to suggest that

the social exchange relationships scale is measuring the same underlying construct as the other measures.

Table 4-1. Correlations between employee-employer relationships constructs

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Social Exchange Relationships - Overall							
2. Social Exchange Relationships - Focus	.84*						
3. Social Exchange Relationships - Stability	.60*	.26*					
4. Social Exchange Relationships – Time Frame	.85*	.59*	.29				
5. Perceived Organizational Support	.39*	.42*	.04	.37*			
6. Leader-Member Exchange	.36*	.33*	.11	.34*	.46*		
7. Psychological Contracts – Employee Obligations	.42*	.40*	.17*	.35*	.25*	.19*	

Note. $N = 248$ * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and zero-order correlations are shown in Table 4-2.

Tests of Hypotheses

Control Variables

As noted in the methods section, participants reported on a number of demographic variables including gender, race, age, salary, education, tenure in their present position, and tenure in the organization. Of these variables, only age, tenure in the position, and tenure in the organization were found to have significant effects on the dependent variables. Thus, for each of the hierarchical regression analyses, only these variables

were treated as control variables, and were entered into the first step of the regression analyses.

Consequences of Social Exchange Relationships

Organizational commitment. Hypotheses 1a – 1c predicted that social exchange relationships would be positively related to affective and normative commitment, respectively, and negatively related to continuance commitment. As show in Table 4-3, after controlling for age and tenure, social exchange relationships explained a significant 45% of the variance in affective commitment, and a significant 39% of variance in normative commitment. Furthermore, social exchange relationships were positively related to affective ($\beta = .68$) and normative ($\beta = .63$) commitment, providing support for hypotheses 1a and 1b. Social exchange relationships, however, did not explain a significant amount of variance in continuance commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 1c was not supported.

Job performance. Hypotheses 2a – 2d predicted that social exchange relationships would be significantly associated with various job performance dimensions. As shown in Table 4-4, after controlling for age and tenure, social exchange relationships explained a significant 3% of the variance in task performance, a significant 12% of the variance in citizenship behaviors, and a significant 4% of the variance in counterproductive behaviors. Furthermore, social exchange relationships were found to be positively associated with both task performance ($\beta = .18$) and citizenship behaviors ($\beta = .35$), and negatively related to counterproductive behaviors ($\beta = -.19$). Therefore, hypotheses 2a – 2c were supported. However, contrary to hypothesis 2d, social exchange relationships did

not explain a significant amount of variance in withdrawal behavior. Hypothesis 2d therefore was not supported.

Antecedents of Social Exchange Relationships

Hypotheses 3 – 4e proposed that situational aspects of the workplace and characteristics of employees should be significantly related to how employees define the nature of their relationship with their organization. To test these hypotheses, a hierarchical regression analysis was used. Specifically, demographic variables that were empirical linked to social exchange relationships were entered into the first step of the regression analysis, followed by job stressors in the second step, the Big Five factors in the third step, and collectivism in the final step of the analysis. The justification of this hierarchical order was as follows. The demographic variables served as control variables, and therefore were entered into the first step. Job stressors were entered into the second step and personality into the subsequent steps, because job stressors are arguably more proximal variables to social exchange relationships than personality variables, which tend to be more distal. The Big Five factors and collectivism were entered into separate steps for two reasons. First, my study wanted to assess the independent influence of the Big Five on social exchange relationships. Second, my study wanted to assess whether collectivism could still explain a significant amount of variance in social exchange relationships once the variance explained by the well-established Big Five factors were taken into account. This ordering allows a more stringent assessment of the practical utility of collectivism. To the extent that collectivism does explain a significant amount of variance in social exchange relationships above and beyond the Big Five factors, researchers can be more confident in incorporating this particular individual difference variable into their research.

Job stressors. Hypothesis 3 predicted that stressors in the workplace would be negatively related to social exchange relationships. As illustrated in Table 4-5, after controlling for demographic variables, stressors in the workplace explained a significant 12% of the variance in social exchange relationships, with unique effects for both role stressors (β = -.12) and uncertainty (β = -.28). These results provide support for hypothesis 3, which stated that stressors in the workplace would be negatively related to social exchange relationships.

Personality. Hypotheses 4a-e predicted that personality (e.g., neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and collectivism) would be significantly related to social exchange relationships. As shown in Table 4-5, after controlling for demographics and role stressors, the Big Five personality factors as a set explained a significant 6% of the variance in social exchange relationships. Of the Big Five factors, only agreeableness had a unique effect. Specifically, agreeableness was positively associated with social exchange relationships (β = .19), which was consistent with hypothesis 4c. Furthermore, as illustrated in the fourth step of the hierarchical regression analysis, collectivism also explained a significant 4% of the variance in social exchange relationships, even after controlling for demographics, job stressors, and the Big Five factors. Consistent with hypothesis 4e, collectivism was positively associated with social exchange relationships (β = 23). These results provide partial support for the notion that personality should be associated with social exchange relationships.

Table 4-2. Correlations among study variables

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Neuroticism	359	2.45	.71	**.87**			
2. Extroversion	359	3.52	.55	-.24*	**.73**		
3. Openness	359	3.66	.41	-.15*	.20*	**.88**	
4. Agreeableness	359	4.12	.53	-.52*	.15*	.09	**.86**
5. Conscientiousness	359	4.28	.51	-.33*	.28*	.11*	.38*
6. Collectivism	359	3.96	.53	-.27*	.21*	.10	.41*
7. Role Stressors	243	2.62	.57	.37*	-.15*	.00	-.37*
8. Uncertainty	243	3.16	.89	.33*	-.02	.01	-.30*
9. Social Exchange Relationships	243	3.45	.52	-.31*	.11	.06	.33*
10. Affective Commitment	243	3.70	.73	-.25*	.12	-.01	.20*
11. Normative Commitment	243	3.44	.70	-.29*	.09	.06	.32*
12. Continuance Commitment	243	3.24	.75	.16*	-.14*	-.07	.01
13. Task Performance	145	4.47	.50	.07	.14	-.09	.00
14. Citizenship Behaviors	145	4.09	.56	.00	.23*	-.11	.03
15. Counterproductive Behaviors	145	1.21	.31	.09	-.08	.12	-.28*
16. Withdrawal Behaviors	145	1.56	.47	.08	-.06	.06	-.05

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. Internal consistency reliabilities presented on the diagonal.

Variable	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Neuroticism							
2. Extroversion							
3. Openness							
4. Agreeableness							
5. Conscientiousness	**.87**						
6. Collectivism	.22*	**.87**					
7. Role Stressors	-.25*	-.23*	**.74**				
8. Uncertainty	-.18*	-.23*	.42*	**.89**			
9. Social Exchange Relationships	.15*	.37*	-.25*	-.35*	**.72**		
10. Affective Commitment	.19*	.41*	-.21*	-.40*	.68*	**.85**	
11. Normative Commitment	.15*	.33*	-.17*	-.27*	.66*	.66*	**.82**
12. Continuance Commitment	-.03	.01	.00	.19*	.00	-.02	.17*
13. Task Performance	.27*	.20*	-.05	-.20*	.13	.16*	.19*
14. Citizenship Behaviors	.20*	.23*	.06	-.13	.31*	.31*	.29*
15. Counterproductive Behaviors	-.16*	-.12	.09	.30*	-.19*	-.08	-.21*
16. Withdrawal Behavior	-.14	-.14	.00	.11	-.03	.04	-.06

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. Internal consistency reliability presented on the diagonal.

Variable	12	13	14	15	16
1. Neuroticism					
2. Extroversion					
3. Openness					
4. Agreeableness					
5. Conscientiousness					
6. Collectivism					
7. Role Stressors					
8. Uncertainty					
9. Social Exchange Relationships					
10. Affective Commitment					
11. Normative Commitment					
12. Continuance Commitment	**.74**				
13. Task Performance	.00	**.91**			
14. Citizenship Behaviors	-.10	.65*	**.91**		
15. Counterproductive Behaviors	-.02	-.33	-.45*	**.74**	
16. Withdrawal Behaviors	-.08	-.20*	-.22*	.47*	**.80**

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. Internal consistency reliabilities presented on the diagonal.

Table 4-3. Hierarchical regression analysis for social exchange relationships and organizational commitment

Variable	Affective Commitment ΔR^2	Affective Commitment β	Normative Commitment ΔR^2	Normative Commitment β
1. Age	.08*	.21*	.06*	.11
Tenure in Position		.09		.19*
Tenure in Organization		.03		-.11
2. Social Exchange Relationships	.40*	.66*	.39*	.65*

Note. $N = 235$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Variables	Continuance Commitment ΔR^2	Continuance Commitment β
1. Age	.02	.02
Tenure in Position		.09
Tenure in Organization		.06
2. Social Exchange Relationships	.00	-.02

Note. $N = 235$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Table 4-4. Hierarchical regression analysis for social exchange relationships and job performance

Variables	Task Performance ΔR^2	Task Performance β	Citizenship Behaviors ΔR^2	Citizenship Behaviors β
1. Age	.09*	-.28*	.08*	-.26*
Tenure in Position		.25*		.25*
Tenure in Organization		.05		.02
2. Social Exchange Relationships	.03*	.18*	.12*	.35*

Note. $N = 142$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Variables	Counterproductive Behaviors ΔR^2	Counterproductive Behaviors β	Withdrawal Behaviors ΔR^2	Withdrawal Behaviors β
1. Age	.06*	.24*	.02	.15
Tenure in Position		-.15		-.12
Tenure in Organization		.13		.00
2. Social Exchange Relationships	.04*	-.19*	.00	-.03

Note. $N = 142$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Table 4-5. Regression results for social exchange relationships and antecedents

Variables	Social Exchange Relationships ΔR^2	Social Exchange Relationships β
1. Age	.05*	.20*
Tenure in Position		.05
Tenure in Organization		-.14*
2. Role Stressors	.12*	-.12*
Uncertainty		-.28*
3. Neuroticism	.06*	-.09
Extroversion		.08
Openness		-.02
Agreeableness		.19*
Conscientiousness		.00
4. Collectivism		.23*

Note. $N = 230$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Although social exchange theory has been used as the theoretical basis for research in a number of areas, thus far this research has yet to explicitly examine the nature (i.e., economic vs. social) of exchange relationships as conceptualized by Blau (1964). As such, my study reports the first empirical assessment of the social exchange relationships between an employee and employer using social exchange theory as the theoretical framework. These relationships are particularly important to understand given the shift in the nature of employee-employer relationships (Rousseau, 1995).

Overview of Results

A methodological contribution of my study is that it provides the initial step towards the construct validation of a measure of social exchange relationships, which is lacking in the social exchange theory literature. A second-order CFA of scale items resulted in a 9-item measure representing an overarching social exchange relationship construct with three latent factors (focus, stability, and time frame). All items consistently loaded on their intended factor with no cross-loadings and the internal consistency of the measure was adequate. Furthermore, the new measure was moderately related to other social exchange theory constructs (POS, LMX, psychological contracts) providing some support for the construct validity of the new scale.

Several strengths of this new scale should be noted. First, the new scale was theoretically derived from Blau's (1964) conceptualization of social exchange relationships and consistent with researcher's suggestions regarding the important

features of employee-employer relationships (McLean Parks, et al., 1998). Second, the new measure captures the multidimensional aspects of social exchange relationships providing sufficient content validity. Third, the referent chosen for the new measure is the employee-employer relationship. This is important to note, given that existing social exchange theory construct measures (e.g., POS, LMX) focus on the quality or support of the organization (or its agents) rather than on the dyadic relationship between an employee and employer. Fourth, because the new scale is composed of the underlying dimensions or features of social exchange relationships, it should generalize across time and populations more so than measures composed of job, career, or organization-specific content. These strengths suggest that this new scale is a step in the right direction in terms of adequately capturing a fairly complex construct.

In addition to the scale development, my study examined both antecedents and consequences of social exchange relationships to gain a deeper understanding of employee-employer relationships and to begin to develop the nomological network of social exchange relationships. Significant associations among social exchange relationships and employee attitudes and behaviors were found. Specifically, the findings of this study revealed that employees who perceived the relationship between their employer and themselves as representative of a social exchange relationship reported higher levels of affective and normative commitment towards their organization than employees who perceived their relationship with their organization to be primarily economic in nature. Social exchange relationships, however, were not associated with continuance commitment. These results suggest that how employees define the nature of their relationship with their organization is not necessarily associated with employees'

commitment to stay with the organization as a function of the costs associated with leaving.

In addition, my study results showed that employees who reported that they had a more personal relationship with their organization were rated by their supervisory as performing at higher levels of task performance, and engaging in more citizenship behaviors, and less counterproductive behaviors than employees who had a more detached and impersonal relationship with their organization. Withdrawal behaviors, however, were not associated with the nature of employee-employer relationships. Although my study did not find support for this linkage, there are theoretical reasons to suggest that such as relationship should exist. Focusing on more objective measures may result in a different finding given that many of the items listed in the withdrawal measure used in my study could not be accurately assessed by supervisors without constantly monitoring employees, or being able to sense whether or not the employee is withdrawing psychologically (e.g., daydreaming).

In addition to examining consequences of social exchange relationships, my study also examined its antecedents. Specifically, my study focused on both person and situation factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the driving forces behind social exchange relationships. Overall, the results of my study provide support for the study hypotheses. Stressors in the work environment were found to be associated with how employees viewed the nature of the relationship they have with their organization. Specifically, employees who perceived the presence of role stressors and uncertainty in the workplace were less likely to have a social exchange relationship with their employer. These results suggest that the work environment, and job stressors in particular, have

direct effects on the type of relationship that develops between an employee and employer.

As indicated above, my study also examined the role of the person in relation to social exchange relationships. The findings indicated that even when the effects of job stressors were taken into account, employees' personality was found to be associated with social exchange relationships. Of the Big Five personality factors, only agreeableness was found to have an association with social exchange relationships. More specifically, employees who were high on agreeableness were more likely to characterize their relationship with their organization as more social and personal in nature. This finding is not surprising given the trusting and self-sacrificing nature of these types of individuals.

In addition to the Big Five factors, my study also examined the role of collectivism, conceptualized as an individual difference variable, in relation to social exchange relationships. In contrast to the Big Five, collectivism is particularly relevant to understanding differences in the nature of employee-employer relationships across individuals. Indeed, the results of my study indicated that even when the effects of situation factors and the Big Five are taken into account, collectivism still explained a significant amount of variance in social exchange relationships. Collectivists were more likely to report that they had a social exchange relationship with their employer than less collective individuals. These results suggest collectivism should be particularly useful in predicting whether employees define the relationship they have with their organization as social or economic in nature. Taken together, the associations found between personality (e.g., agreeableness and collectivism) and social exchange relationships demonstrate the

potential predictive power of personality in explaining the differences in employee-employer relationships, and suggest that certain types of individuals are more likely to have social exchange relationships with their employer than others.

Limitations

Although the findings of my study are generally supportive of our predictions, future research should address some limitations. First, several of the relationships examined were self-reports, and thus may be susceptible to percept-percept inflation. There are, however, reasons to suggest that this may not be a major concern. First, with the exception of the links between job stressors and social exchange relationships, the relationships assessed in this study were separated by a six week time period, reducing some concern regarding same source bias. Second, collectivism explained a significant amount of variance in social exchange relationships, even after controlling for demographics, job stressors, and the Big Five. As such, the effects of same-source inflation should be reduced due to the partially of these variables. Third, even if one discounts the links that were assessed from the same source, significant relationships were still found for social exchange relationships and supervisor-rated job performance dimensions. Finally, after an extensive review of same-source bias, Crampton and Wagner concluded that "percept-percept inflation may be more the exception than the rule" (1994, p.72). Nonetheless, future research needs to address this limitation.

Another limitation of the study deals with the inference of causality in the relationships examined. In particular, the six-week time period between data collection stages may not be enough to assume causality. If one truly wanted to examine how and why social exchange relationships develop, and consequences of such relationships, a study would need to be conducted with longer time intervals. More specifically, future

research would need to collect data from employees at the start of their employment before they have a chance to form an opinion regarding the relationship they have with their organization. Thus, the design of my study does not allow for causal inferences to be made about the relationships examined.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, construct validation is an iterative process. Thus, further research is needed to determine the construct validity of the new scale. The scale developed in my study is based on one sample, and as such needs to be cross-validated to make sure the results are not sample specific. Moreover, although the psychometric qualities of the scale were adequate, there is still room for improvement. Of course, this particularly study is only a first step towards developing an understanding of a construct that has been frequently provoked in the management literature but not explicitly operationalized. In this regard, my study has accomplished its purpose. However, future research should continue to refine the 9-item scale and develop the nomological network surrounding social exchange relationships construct.

Practical Implications

Despite these limitations, the results of this study provide several practical implications for managers. First, given the organizationally-relevant outcomes associated with social exchange relationships, managers need to begin to understand what factors foster these types of relationships. My study provides suggestions in this regard. For example, the results of this study suggest that job stressors in the workplace may be detrimental to the development of social exchange relationships. Specifically, ambiguous role responsibilities, conflicting role demands, and excessive amounts of work are placing strain on employee-employer relationships (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Managers interested in fostering social exchange relationships should therefore minimize

the presence of these job stressors in the workplace. Managers can accomplish this by clarifying role expectations through better communication among employees of the organization, particularly subordinates and supervisors. In addition, providing employees with opportunities to voice their opinions and/or participate in decision-making will provide employees with a sense of control, and an outlet for their frustration. Finally, goal prioritizing and time management skills could be provided to employees to provide them with the capabilities to better cope with stressors in their work environment.

The results of my study further suggest that in addition to managing the presence of job stressors in the workplace, managers should begin to focus on characteristics of the employees. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that managers interested in fostering social exchange relationships may want to add collectivism to staffing systems, in addition to Big Five data, which is routinely collected as employees enter into an organization. By supplementing existing staffing systems with collectivism, managers have a more comprehensive assessment from which to make staffing decisions, particularly for placements in which employees have a substantial amount of autonomy and little supervision, and placements that require the employee to readily "give more" when a direct link to immediate rewards is not apparent.

Future Research

The results of this study provide a number of avenues for future research. For example, researchers should continue to develop the nomological network of social exchange relationships. One possibility area of research is to examine other ways to foster social exchange relationships. For example, it was inferred in the introduction that POS may be considered to be a prerequisite for social exchange relationships. As such, future research could examine POS as a possible antecedent. Future research should also

examine other organizationally-relevant outcomes in addition to the subjective ratings of job performance examined in my study. For instance, objective ratings of turnover would be particularly relevant to social exchange relationships given that social exchange relationships are argued to promote long-term relationships (Blau, 1964). Future research should also examine more subtle means of withdrawal such as absenteeism and sick days taken.

Furthermore, future research needs to assess the incremental validity of this scale in relation to other social exchange theory constructs (e.g., POS, LMX, psychological constructs) present in the management literature. Although my study found that the magnitude of the correlations between these constructs and social exchange relationships were not strong enough to suggest that social exchange relationships was measuring the same underlying construct, future research will need to empirical assess the degree of overlap between these constructs. This research coupled with continued development of social exchange relationships nomological network should over time provide evidence for the validity of the new social exchange relationships scale.

Future research could also examine mediators to gain a better understanding of how and why certain individuals develop social exchange relationships, and how these relationships influence job performance. Social exchange theory may provide some suggestions in this regard. For example, one potential mediator between personality and social exchange relationships is trust, which social exchange theory argues to be an absolute necessity for the development and maintenance of social exchange relationships.

Future research should also examine boundary conditions that specify when the association between social exchange relationships and job performance will be stronger

or weaker. For instance, future research could examine cross-level models in which aspects of the organization or department are taken into account. As an example, more mechanistic organizations may deter even the most collectivist employee from developing a social exchange relationship with the organization to the extent that employees perceive such relationships to be devalued and unwarranted by the organization.

Conclusion

My study is a first step at developing a construct valid measure of social exchange relationships. These relationships appear to have important consequences for organizations in that social exchange relationships were found to predict various aspects of job performance including how well an employee performs required tasks and responsibilities, how much an employee contributes to the social and psychological environment of the organization, and how frequently an employee will engages in behaviors that are detrimental to the organization. Furthermore, the results show that it may be possible to predict these relationships using knowledge about employees' personality and the work environment in general. Theoretically, this study has important implications for researchers interested in delineating the motivational mechanisms behind an employee's willingness to contribute to the organization's well-being. Practically, these results have implications for managers interested in obtaining the beneficial effects associated with social exchange relationships.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was born in Pontiac, Michigan, and grew up in Waterford Michigan. I attended Crary Middle School, where I first met my husband, Erik A. Jackson, and spent my high school years at Waterford Mott High School. I graduated with honors from Michigan State University (MSU) earning a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. While at MSU, I was an active member of a service fraternity and served in AmeriCorp.

Erik and I moved to Gainesville, Florida in 1999, so that I could pursue a doctorate degree in management at the University of Florida. Between studying and teaching, I spent most of my free time with Erik. Our favorite activities include watching movies on the weekend, kayaking, and playing frisbee with our dog, Copper.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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